

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

A Notice of Allowance for the present application was mailed on January 13, 2004, On January 14, 2004 (before the Applicants received the Notice of Allowance), the Applicants filed an Amendment updating the "Cross Reference to Related Applications" section of the present application.¹ In an Office Action dated April 7, 2004, the Examiner disapproved the Amendment filed on January 14, 2004, as it was filed after prosecution was closed. Submitted with this Request for Continued Examination (RCE) is a Second Amendment updating the "Cross Reference to Related Applications" section of the present Application. Entry of the Amendment submitted herewith is respectfully requested. Do not enter the Amendment filed on January 14, 2004.

Information Disclosure Statement

Submitted herewith is an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) under 37 C.F.R. 1.97(b). The Applicants respectfully request acknowledgement of the references cited in the Information Disclosure Statement.

Regarding Amendments

In the specification, a "Cross Reference to Related Applications" section has been updated to provide the serial numbers for three related applications which were first identified in the present application *as originally filed*, and to provide identifying information for continuation

¹ In the Office Action dated April 7, 2004, the Examiner referred to the January 14, 2004 Amendment as being filed on January 20, 2004.

applications of one of the related applications. These corrections are of a clerical nature and do not add "new matter".

Claim Status

Claims 1-5, 7-10, 12-32, 34-37, 39-59, 61-64, and 66-81 are now pending.

The Examiner is thanked for his kind allowance of claims 1-5, 7-10, 12-32, 34-37, 39-59, 61-64, and 66-81.

Claims 6, 11, 33, 38, 60, and 65 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer.

No "new matter" has been added by the Amendment.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully asserted that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Request for Allowance

It is believed that this Amendment places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Early favorable consideration of this Amendment is earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner is thanked for the kind allowance of claims 1-5, 7-10, 12-32, 34-37, 39-59, 61-64, and 66-81. The Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance as set forth in the Notice of Allowance dated January 13, 2004. However, the Applicants point out that the reasons for allowability of the above referenced claims are not limited to the reasons for allowance as set forth in the Office Action, and that additional reasons for allowability may exist, each of which may be independently sufficient to establish the patentability of one or more pending claims.

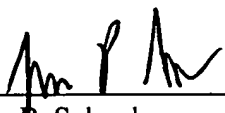
The Applicants respectfully reserve the right to introduce, articulate, or otherwise comment on any such additional reasons for allowance as may be appropriate in any future proceedings concerning the claimed invention.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-1698.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: April 9, 2004



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